

Take a chocolaty dive into this dense and delicious dessert



Fallen Chocolate Soufflé Cake

Photos Susie Iventosch

By Susie Iventosch

This cake is rich, dense, and definitely very chocolaty. Made with a full pound of bittersweet chocolate, eggs, a little sugar and Amaretto, it is decadent and delicious. We love to serve it with raspberry coulis and a dollop of vanilla whipped cream. The original cake was one my mother-in-law made for family gatherings. She found it in the newspaper as one of the featured desserts at the iconic Chanterelle Restaurant in Manhattan. We have made a few changes, substituting brown sugar for white, Amaretto for orange or coffee liqueur, and all bittersweet chocolate in place of the combination of semi-sweet and unsweetened. I hope you enjoy this cake as much as our family does!

We also make it in two smaller springform pans when we want to freeze some for later

or if we have a smaller group that we are serving. This cake freezes well, and all you need to do is completely wrap it in plastic wrap before freezing it. Be sure to let it chill for a few hours in the refrigerator before wrapping it up for the freezer. When you want to serve it, remove it from the freezer, remove the plastic wrap and thaw it out for an hour or so before serving.

Because the cake is made with beaten egg yolks and beaten egg whites, you want to be very careful when folding the chocolate and eggs together. You don't want to deflate the eggs you've worked so hard to whip up! Also, due to the eggs, the cake will puff up when it's baking and as it cools, it will fall and that's what makes the cake so dense and rich. I just don't want you to be surprised as your 3-inch cakes falls to one and one half inches in height!

Fallen Chocolate Soufflé Cake

(Serves about 20 small but perfect slices)

INGREDIENTS

16 oz. Bittersweet chocolate chips, or bars, coarsely chopped
1 cup unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
1/4 cup Amaretto (or your favorite liqueur like Kailua, or Cointreau)
9 large eggs, separated and at room temperature
3/4 cup light brown sugar
1/2 cup heavy cream (beaten for garnish)
Dark chocolate shavings

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 F. Butter the bottom and sides of a 10-inch spring-form pan, or two 7-inch springform pans. Dust the bottom and sides with flour. (This really helps prevent the cake from sticking to the pan.)

Melt chocolate and butter together in a saucepan over low heat, or in the top of a double boiler. Stir until smooth. Remove from heat and cool to lukewarm. Stir in vanilla and Amaretto.

Meanwhile, beat egg yolks with brown sugar until very thick and the mixture forms a ribbon when beaters are removed. Gently fold chocolate mixture into the egg yolks.

Beat egg whites in your mixer, or in a bowl with clean and dry beaters until stiff peaks form. Gently fold the egg whites in three batches into the chocolate-egg yolk mixture. Do not over mix or beat the mixture, because you want the air to stay in the mixture.

When just blended, pour the mixture into the prepared pan(s). Bake 25-30 minutes for the 10-inch, and 20-25 minutes for the 7-inch pans, or just until the center of the cake is barely set and still a little bit jiggly. Remove from the oven and cool completely. Refrigerate at least an hour, or overnight before serving.

When ready to serve, slice cake and serve with a dollop of unsweetened whipped cream (or barely sweetened with a little Amaretto or whatever liqueur you used), and chocolate shavings. We make our chocolate shavings by running a potato peeler over a bar of dark chocolate and it works out well, but if you have another method, that is great too!

Raspberry Coulis

(Makes about 1 cup of coulis +/-)

INGREDIENTS

12 oz. fresh raspberries
1/2 cup granulated sugar
2 tablespoons water

DIRECTIONS

Make a simple syrup by whisking the sugar and water together in a small pot. Bring the mixture to a boil and continue on a low boil until the sugar is dissolved and the mixture is slightly thickened. Remove from heat.

Meanwhile, place rinsed raspberries into the food processor. Pour warm simple syrup over the berries and process until smooth.

Strain the mixture through a mesh sieve to eliminate the seeds, pressing down through the sieve with the back of a spoon. Use a rubber spatula to scrape the strained sauce into the receptacle bowl. Mixture will cool down through the straining process. Pour into a container with a tight-fitting lid and set aside if using soon, or refrigerate until ready to serve.



Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>

Hope & proactive joy

By Linda Fodrini-Johnson

"Hope Springs Eternal." That saying is from "An Essay on Man," by Alexander Pope. People always hope for the best, even in the face of adversity. This is what we want to hang onto and something I try to help all my clients find. However, in the midst of pain, this "elusive hope" can be a blur and be forgotten.

Waiting and wishing for a change in our physical health, mental health or relationships can bring us down. Often, we hear that it is not time for a procedure. We may think it is not time to bring in help to a family member or even the time to move a loved one into senior living. The latter often involves denial or resistance from us and/or the person we are concerned about.

Then there are those illnesses that have no treatments to cure such as: Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, some cancers and cardiac diagnoses as well as some relentless mental health challenges to name a few. I should add "grief" to

this list as well.

Spiritual individuals even have difficulty connecting with God when pain, dependence and disappointment seem to be about every waking moment. So, what do we mortals need to do? Where will we get our substance to go on each day? Individuals question their faith and, during this time of COVID, many houses of worship are not as open as they were. Many feel excluded and forgotten, especially those who don't do Zoom or can't get to the only service that might be too early for a disabled individual to attend.

There is no one answer for us to find joy despite adversity. In my career I have met many individuals that somehow survived many trials and tribulations during their long lives and still are filled with joy. There are two common themes that I have seen in these people: one is gratefulness and the other is to seek joy in the moments. In their gratefulness they are also generous with their time to talk to others or give financial support to causes dear to

their hearts. I am going to call these people the "Resilient."

Seeking joy is much more a proactive move than expecting joy to just happen. True, occasionally we are surprised by nature or an unexpected gift or visit. The resilient actually seek out joy; they read positive daily meditations, they read the comics, they listen to uplifting music or anything that ever brought them joy. They find a way to still stay connected to that passion. A sailing enthusiast might not be able to sail due to vision or mobility, but they can still get to the water and watch, smell the air or feel the sand or a moving dock, not with regret, but with gratefulness and joy.

Forest bathing, known as shinrin-yoku in Japan, is a therapeutic, meditative practice of reconnecting with nature and being distracted by any of those "joy stealing" feelings. It usually starts with a breathing relaxation exercise and then a walk/stroll or even just sitting in a wooded area. See the resources section of my newsletter for a great book that will guide you in "forest bathing." During

my daily walks I look for shapes and geometry in the nature; I also love to focus on the colors in the sky and clouds.

February is thought of as the month of love because of Valentine's Day, but if you are burdened with a life challenge, it can be a sad time, especially if you have had a major loss or have a serious health challenge. This month I challenge you to seek "Joy" if only for a few moments beginning today and then seek just a few more such moments on each day to follow. Find someone to confide in and be your companion on this journey of seeking joy in the snippets of life.

Dr. Atul Gawande in his book "Being Mortal" (a good read) says we want to live till we die – not die years before. This is what you do: you plant the seeds of joy. They won't cure or fill the scars of life, but they will allow you to live and smile.

The next free Zoom Class for Family Caregivers will be at 11 a.m. April 8 on Dementia: From diagnosis to home care. If you are concerned

about someone in the early stages of memory loss, this class is for you. Just send me an email www.LindaFodrini-Johnson.com and I will put you on the list.



Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC, is a Licensed Family Therapist and Certified Care Manager. She has been practicing professional care management since 1984. Linda founded Eldercare Services, a full-service care management and home care company in 1989. Eldercare Services is now a division of Home Care Assistance and continues to provide Bay Area families with care management, advocacy, counseling, support groups and education.

High school musicals return to the stage this spring

... continued from Page B1

And the students are excited! "I've been looking forward to this year's musical for the past two years, and it has not disappointed. The rehearsals are such a special space to me; the long hours spent singing and dancing with all my friends are what I've missed so dearly during COVID," Senior Ruby Vanhouten at Campolindo shares.

First up, Acalanes High School will be performing "Beauty and the Beast" in early March. "It is incredible to have everyone together again and be able to stage a musical! The performing arts is all about collaboration and working together to create a performance. Not being able to simply be in the same room for almost a year and a half was so difficult, but it makes coming back together something to celebrate more than

ever before," director Lauren Gibson says.

"And so much of what we do is driven by the students. We have a student director, a student producer ... it's almost like a leadership class. They learn all sorts of social skills that pertain to everyday life; it's a whole experience. It's not just about the actors, it's about the stage, and the lights and every detail that brings the production together," Co-producer and technical director Ed Meehan explains.

"Beauty and the Beast" will run March 2-5. Tickets can be purchased at www.ahsperformingarts.org.

Campolindo High School will feature "Cinderella." Unique to Lamorinda schools, Campolindo leverages the help of parents to bring their shows to life. "We have an amazing community of students and parents who come

together to create our shows. More than 150 students and nearly as many parents help out in one way or another to bring our show to the stage," producer and musical director Mark Roberts shares.

"The students have been incredibly resilient and ferocious in their appetite to present artistic work in spite of enormous challenges," Roberts adds.

Stage director David Pinkham explains one of the challenges of a two-year hiatus: "We've lost some significant continuity in the program, with students who were sophomores in the last production now jumping right into the leadership position as seniors. The community we build between the cast members, crew, orchestra and staff is the most valuable part of the entire process, so we've been working hard to bridge the conti-

nity gap and bring along the freshmen and sophomores."

"Cinderella" runs March 11-13 and 18-20. Tickets can be purchased at www.cam-pochoir.com.

Miramonte High School's spring musical is "Pajama Game." This 1950s classic is a love story set amongst a labor dispute in a pajama factory. "After doing a few contemporary musicals, we wanted to expose our students to something more classical, and coming out of the pandemic, we wanted a lighter, happier tone," explains director Cousins.

Miramonte has a unique model for musical theater. To participate in the musical, students must enroll in the Musical Theater Workshop class. "We adopted this model years ago and it has been working very well for us ever since. One of the benefits is knowing exactly who will be

in the show before the school year even starts. That is helpful when it comes to choosing a show," Musical director Meredith Hawkins says.

In addition, the costumes, props, lights, sound, and set are entirely designed and created by students enrolled in Miramonte's Stagecraft program.

The Miramonte show runs March 10-13 and tickets are available at showtix4u.com.

The music and theater departments welcome the Lamorinda community to support their programs by attending the live performances this spring.

The district had not received an update from CDPH on masking for the performing arts before press time.